

Lochside Playgroup Day Care of Children

Community Lounge
Lochside Primary School
Glenesk Avenue
Montrose
DD10 9AN

Telephone: 07885 857 507

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
23 November 2022

Service provided by:
Committee of Lochside Playgroup

Service provider number:
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Service no:
CS2003002881

About the service

Lochside Playgroup provides a day care of children service. The service is provided within Lochside Primary School, Montrose. The setting is registered to provide a care service to a maximum of 23 children not yet attending primary school at any one time, of whom no more than 10 may be aged 2 years to under 3 years. Children are cared for in an open plan playroom, which contains a kitchen, self-contained toilets, and have access to a secure garden space.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced inspection which took place on 21 and 22 November 2022 between 09:00 and 14:00. One inspector carried out the inspection.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration and complaints information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered throughout the inspection year.

To inform our evaluation we:

- spoke with children and parents using the service;
- spoke with the staff and management;
- observed practice and children's experiences; and
- reviewed documents.

Key messages

- Children experienced warm and caring interactions which helped them to feel nurtured and valued.
- Mealtimes were sociable and calm, providing a positive experience.
- Children could benefit from accessing the local community to support children feel connected and have a sense of pride for their wider community.
- Play spaces took account children's stages of development and learning.
- The service was developing the outdoor area and were hoping to introduce more free flow and physical development.
- Children benefited from a culture of continuous improvement.
- Children's wellbeing was being supported by compassionate and responsive staff who knew children well.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How good is our care, play and learning?

5 - Very Good

1.1 Nurturing care and support

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Interactions and connections between staff and children were respectful, kind, and nurturing. For example, staff provided cuddles and comfort to children and were quick to respond if a child become upset. As a result, children experienced positive attachments to staff. Parents commented: 'The staff are friendly, approachable...they show interest, and my child loves the environment' and 'the settling in period was handled very well by the staff. Comfort is key for my child, and they do this well'.

Staff worked as a team to support each child and respond to their unique and immediate requirements. This supported children to be confident and independent and took account of their needs, rights, and choices.

Personal plans were effective, and information gathered in the 'My World' documents helped the planning and the delivery of tailored care. Relationships with families had been established and plans were regularly reviewed in partnership with parents. This ensured information was current and relevant to support children to progress and achieve their potential. Parents' comments included: 'I feel staff know my child well and understand their needs' and 'staff adapt and listen to the needs of my child and take good care of them'.

Meals and snacks were nutritionally balanced and healthy. It was sociable, calm, and a positive experience for children. Staff sat with children which supported social and language skills through the various topics of conversation which took place between children and staff. Staff were smiling and encouraging. This created a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere for children. Independence at mealtimes could be developed. For example, to build on the self-serving of food and children being more involved in the preparation of snacks.

1.3 Play and learning

Children actively led their play and learning and were happy, confident, and engaged in various play and activities. Opportunities for uninterrupted play and learning was well managed and there was a balanced mix of natural and planned experiences for children. The range of resources assisted children in their play and learning. For example, mark making, numeracy and literacy was promoted across the setting through activities and displays. Staff skilfully engaged children by asking questions and giving children opportunities to make their own decisions. This supported children to lead their learning, problem solve and seek different ways to explore.

Spaces were organised and well laid out to support movement and freedom for children. Children would benefit from accessing the wider local community to further enhance imagination, learning and development. The service recognised this opportunity and agreed to recommence the connections outside of the playgroup.

Planning approaches were carried out weekly and were child centred. Staff ensured parents were well-informed of children's learning and development progress using 'Seesaw'. Continuing to build on the use of mind maps, staff observation booklets and floor books would further strengthen this area. A parent told us: 'the seesaw updates and attention to details in the communication are important to me, the playgroup always deliver on this'.

How good is our setting?

5 - Very Good

2.2 children experience high quality facilities

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

The service operated within the grounds of the school. This promoted a sense of inclusion and being part of the wider school community. The setting was clean, bright, well ventilated, and welcoming. Homely touches and natural resources helped children to feel valued and comfortable. Furniture and resources were of a high standard and organised. Toys and equipment indoors and outdoors took account of the age and stage of development of children. They were easily accessible to the children and supported independence, investigation, and inquiry.

Staff were clear about their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a high standard of safety and infection prevention and control practices. For example, through effective handwashing, cleaning surfaces and resetting the room throughout the day. Daily cleaning minimised the risk of infection and where required personal protective equipment (PPE) was worn. As a result, children's health and wellbeing needs were prioritised.

Staff valued the importance of children experiencing outdoor play regardless of the weather. Children benefited from the service, ensuring children had appropriate clothing, so they were comfortable in all weathers. Developments within the playgroup's own outdoor space were at an early stage. Progressing this area would aid staff and children to benefit from better access to outdoor play and learning through free flow. We however, recognised all children spent time outdoors during their session to promote an active lifestyle.

Arrangements for security within the setting and outdoors were well considered. Sensitive information was stored securely which reduced the risk to children's confidentiality. Children's registers were in place which supported awareness of numbers in attendance. Risk assessments were followed. As a result, children benefited from a safe environment that promoted their health and wellbeing.

How good is our leadership?

4 - Good

3.1: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

We made an evaluation of good for this key question, as several important strengths, taken together, clearly outweighed areas for improvement. Whilst some improvements were needed, the strengths identified had a significant, positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

The service had a vision, values, and aim which were included in the parent's handbook. However, a few parents and staff were not fully confident around the vision, values and aims. One parent stated: 'I would admit I am not aware of the service's vision, values and aims. To reflect the goals of children, parents, and staff we encouraged the service to involve all parties in the review of these. This would ensure everyone is part of a shared vision of working together.

The service had an improvement plan and quality assurance was taking place. Children benefited from a culture of continuous improvement. Effective policies, procedures, reviews, and quality assurance processes were in place. This supported development and progress of the service. The manager recognised areas where the service could be strengthened. For example, empowering staff to ensure there are leadership opportunities across the team.

The team were in the initial stages of familiarising themselves with 'A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school aged childcare' to support assessment and evaluation within the service. We signposted the manager to videos within the ELC Improvement Section of the Care Inspectorate Hub to support their improvement journey.

Accidents and incidents were recorded and stored. The service should review their system around tracking and monitoring of accidents and incidents. For example, information within records could be expanded along with the formal monthly auditing. This would support the service to identify common occurrences or steps to prevent recurrence to support children's safety and wellbeing.

How good is our staff team?

5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how these supported positive outcomes for people, therefore we evaluated this key question as very good.

Staff were deployed within the service effectively, which ensured children were safe. The manager recognised the importance of good adult to child ratios to support children's needs. Staff breaks were organised to minimise disruption to the children's day. This promoted everyone's wellbeing and safety. The level of staffing was very good to meet children's needs and support the flow of the session.

Staff brought a range of skills and experiences to the setting. The team were newly formed, and the team worked well together and supported each other where required. Staff comments included: 'I feel the playgroup is a fantastic environment to become a part of, I'm happy with the support and guidance shown by the team' and 'I feel very settled...all the team have been very welcoming and helpful, and I feel I'm starting to find my place'.

Newly recruited staff were effectively supported from the manager and wider staff team. Staff spoke positively of their induction. To support understanding, help strengthen and identify training we highlighted how newer staff would benefit from using the National Induction Resource pack as part of their inductions. We signposted the manager to Scottish Government 'Early learning and childcare - national induction resource'

There was a positive and supportive ethos within the service. Both the manager and staff spoke of the positive relationships that they had formed. Comments included: 'I am very happy and proud to work for Lochside Playgroup. I feel valued both by management and by the children and their families. I could not ask to work somewhere better' and 'I feel very fortunate to be a member of staff at Lochside Playgroup'.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How good is our care, play and learning?	5 - Very Good
1.1 Nurturing care and support	5 - Very Good
1.3 Play and learning	5 - Very Good
How good is our setting?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Children experience high quality facilities	5 - Very Good
How good is our leadership?	4 - Good
3.1 Quality assurance and improvement are led well	4 - Good
How good is our staff team?	5 - Very Good
4.3 Staff deployment	5 - Very Good

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